

Jacques Rancière: Pädagogische Lektüren

Es sind die zugleich politischen und ästhetischen Einsatzpunkte Jacques Rancières, die das pädagogische Nachdenken herausfordern: Angesprochen sind damit etwa die Intervention in ein- wie ausschließende Ordnungen des Sinnlichen, die Artikulation eines 'Unvernehmens' über die Unterstellung von je spezifischen Gleichheitsmotiven und das Plädoyer für ein ästhetisches Regime, das in unterschiedlichen Feldern definitive und privilegierte Sichtweisen irritiert. Diese Herausforderungen gelten nicht nur für Begründungen und Qualifizierungen von Praktiken und Institutionen; ebenso erscheinen pädagogische Problemstellungen stets disziplinübergreifend in Spannungsfeldern von Politik und (polizeilicher) Ordnung situiert.

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Lehrende und Studierende in den Bereichen Erziehungswissenschaft, (politische) Philosophie, Politikwissenschaften und Soziologie.

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Jacques Rancière – zum Anfang

Ralf Mayer, Alfred Schäfer und Steffen Wittig

„Einsatz“ – das meint mindestens dreierlei: a) einsetzen im Sinne von Anfahren, etwas beginnen in einem Geschehen, das bereits angefangen hat [...]. Das „Worin“ des Einsatzes ist dabei ein Feld bereits bestehender Elemente, Relationen und Regeln, in das etwas Neues hinein- bzw. dazukommt und dort Veränderungen, Unterbrechungen, Differenzen oder gar Störungen eingespielter Abläufe, Ordnungen und Grenzen bewirkt. Einsatz meint aber auch b) [...] das, worum es in einem Spiel, einer Wette, einem Streit oder einem Kampf geht. [...] Und schließlich geht es auch c) um einen Einsatz für etwas, für ein Ziel, für etwas, was man nicht hat.

(Masschelein und Wimmer 1996, S. 7)

1

Die Schwierigkeit, eine Auseinandersetzung mit einem Werk zu beginnen, liegt unter anderem darin, dass streng genommen kein unvermittelter ‚Referenzpunkt Null‘ existiert, der den einen Anfang bezeichnen und darüber die Koordinaten

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The Matter with/of School. Storylines of the Scholastic Fable

Jan Masschelein, Maarten Simons and Jorge Larrosa

And emancipation, yesterday as today, is a way to live in the world of the enemy in the ambiguous position of the one who fights the dominant order but is also able to construct in it some places apart where one can escape its laws (Rancière 2017, p. 50).

At the beginning of his comments on 'Crash', a film by David Cronenberg, Jacques Rancière writes that there are two ways in which we can talk about a film oeuvre, but in fact *about every work*, about everything that is made ("toute chose fabriquée", Rancière 2005, p. 37). The first one is to appreciate it according to the idea or intention that constitutes its origin, and hence to start a comparison between what has been made and what the maker(s) wanted to make. Starting from the assumed, attributed or asserted intentions and aimed for effects of the maker(s) one looks at what is made as their more or less successful translation. The second one is to forget about all this and to confront the work, the thing that is made,

This text is based on a seminar and exposition 'What's the matter with school?' which was given by Jan Masschelein, Maarten Simons and Jorge Larrosa at the 'Budafactory' in Kortrijk, Belgium (February–April 2017).

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and to imagine for oneself the fable that is offered to us through the sequence and concatenation of shots (or images, words, phrases, ...). The second one is the one that Rancière claims for his own 'fables' and can easily be related to the words from Jacotot which Rancière recalls in *Le Maître Ignorant* (1987, 1991): that it is always again about seeing (or listening), about saying what you see (hear), connecting it to what you know already and telling what you think about it. You can always start somewhere, you can always start the intellectual adventure, and everybody can do that: the famous and infamous announcement of 'the equality of intelligences'. Which is not about the simple declaration that everybody can have her own personal opinion and view, since telling what you see and what you think about it is conditioned upon being attentive, on the effort of attention and the suspension of intention where you always have to indicate where one can see what you see and verify what you say, an effort which often requires a 'master' who supports the effort. We could maybe say that in our case, living in the time of the permanent invasion of email, this master can have the form of putting 'deadlines'.

In order to construct our own fable with the work and words of Rancière, which could be called also a small intervention in the present, we will not refer so much to *Le Maître Ignorant*, but we will mainly use a minor text of Rancière, *École, production, égalité* (1988), which as far as we could check is neither translated in English nor in German. And we will connect it to some comments Rancière gave in various conversations upon his work and its relation to the times we live in (Rancière 2009, 2017).¹ Associating it to Rancière's *fable cinématographique* (2001) we want to call it the *scholastic fable*. Indeed parts of the work (words, sentences, images) of Rancière enable us to describe very well what is at stake in the invention of the school, to tell its story as part of the story of emancipation and to clarify why today school is both worthwhile to be defended and is in need of defense (as are, to some extent and more directly addressed by Rancière, other 'democratic inventions' as the theatre, the museum and the cinema). Hence, contrary to what might be expected in view of the way in which *Le maître ignorant* has often been read and been used, the words of Rancière will help us to defend, not to criticize the school. Indeed, we contend that the school is a crucial part of what Rancière considers to be the "fundamental issue" today: "the possibility

¹All translations from these texts will be ours.

to maintain spaces of 'play'" ("la possibilité de maintenir des espaces de jeu", Rancière 2009, p. 596), the possibility to "give air and to loosen the bonds that lock spectacles in a form of visibility, bodies into an estimation of their capacity, the possible into the machine to produce the evidences of the given" ("donner de l'air, de desserrer les liens qui enferment des spectacles dans une forme de visibilité, des corps dans une estimation de leur capacité, le possible dans la machine à produire les évidences du donné", *ibid.*, p. 593), the possibility to excavate holes "creuser des trous", Rancière 2017, p. 65) in what he calls the capitalist milieu that envelops us and in which our activity normally reproduces the conditions of domination ("le Capital [...] est le milieu au sein duquel nous vivons [...] et dans lequel notre activité normalement reproduit les conditions de domination [...] ce milieu enveloppant", *ibid.*, pp. 64–65).

Let us start with a rather extensive rendering of the first pages of *École, production, égalité* and of the distinctions and characterizations Rancière (1988) introduces.² Reacting upon the motto launched by the French Ministry of Education 'Learning for enterprise/to undertake' ("Apprendre pour entreprendre") Rancière proposes the notion of the school-form ("la forme-école") and states: "The school is first and foremost not a place or a function defined by an external social purpose (finality). It is first of all a symbolic form, a norm of separation of spaces, times and social occupations. School does not, at first, mean learning but free time. The Greek *scholè* separates two uses of time: the use of time of those for whom the constraints of service and production, by definition, abnegates the time to do something else, and the use of time of those who have the time, i.e. those who are exempt from the constraints of labor. Among these some enhance this availability even more while sacrificing as much as possible as well the privileges as the duties of their condition for the pure pleasure of learning. If *scholè* defines the way of life of the equal, these school-children ("écoliers") of the Academy or the Lyceum, of the Arcade or the Garden are the equals par excellence. What kind of relationship exists between these young, well-born Athenians and the disparate and rebellious flock of our 'collèges' in the suburbs? *Nothing but a form*. Let us agree on the school-form as it is defined by three fundamental symbolic relations: the school is not first and foremost the transmission of knowledge preparing

²For a comment on this text see also: Masschelein and Simons (2010).

children for their adult lives. It is first of all a place outside the necessities of labor, the place where one learns for the sake of learning, the place of equality par excellence. [...] The school has nothing to do with equality as an end, for which it would be the means. It is not equalizing through her content [...] but through her form. The democratic public school is already redistribution [...]. If the school changes the social condition of school children, this is first of all because it makes them participate in her equal space-time, separated from the constraints of labor. The banalization of the school form, identifying the social time of the school with the natural time of the maturation of children, hides this fundamental symbolic rupture [...]. The school is no preparation but separation [...]. The school does not *promise* falsely an equality which it would let to be denied by social reality. It is not about 'learning' (being initiated into) some social condition. It is an *occupation*, separated from the others, governed in particular by a heterogeneous logic with regard to the productive order. Its various effects upon the other orders has first of all to do with the way in which it propagates equality [...]. The school is the privileged place of the negotiation of equality, which carries social models that put into crisis the social models which are rooted in the 'apprenticeship' of productive life" (Rancière 1988, pp. 2–3, 5).³

Written more or less in the same period as *Le maître ignorant* (1987), in which Rancière confronts us with what can be read (and has been read) also as a harsh

³ "L'école n'est pas d'abord un lieu ou une fonction définis par une finalité sociale extérieure. Elle est d'abord une forme symbolique, une norme de séparation des espaces, des temps et des occupations sociales. École ne veut pas dire d'abord apprentissage mais loisir. La *scholè* grecque sépare deux usages du temps: l'usage de ceux auxquels l'astreinte du service et de la production ôte, *par définition*, le temps de faire autre chose; l'usage de ceux qui *ont le temps*, c'est-à-dire sont dispensés des contraintes du travail. Parmi ceux-ci, quelques-uns majorent encore cette disponibilité en sacrifiant autant que possible les privilèges et les devoirs de leur condition au pur plaisir d'apprendre. Si la *scholè* définit le mode de vie des égaux, ces 'écoliers' de l'Académie ou du Lycée, du Portique ou du Jardin sont les égaux par excellence. Quelle rapport entre ces jeunes Athéniens bien nés et la foule bigarrée et rétive de nos collèges de banlieues? *Rien qu'une forme*, convenons-en: la forme-école, telle que la définissent trois rapports symboliques fondamentaux: l'école n'est pas d'abord le lieu de la transmission des savoirs préparant les enfants à leur activité d'adultes. Elle est d'abord le lieu placé hors des nécessités du travail, le lieu où l'on apprend pour apprendre, le lieu de l'égalité par excellence. [...] L'école n'a pas affaire à l'égalité comme à un but dont elle serait le moyen. Elle n'égalise pas par son contenu [...] mais par sa forme. L'école publique démocratique est déjà redistribution [...]. Si l'école change la condition sociale des écoliers, c'est d'abord parce qu'elle les fait participer à son espace-temps égale, séparé des contraintes du travail. La banalisation de la forme

critique on pedagogy and on educational institutions and their 'stultifying mas-labors', it is striking that Rancière states that the school is *the place of equality by excellence*, a phrase he will repeat almost literally in *La haine de la démocratie* where the school is said to be "the place of the symbolic visibility of equality and its empirical negotiation" ("le lieu de la visibilité symbolique de l'égalité en même temps que sa négociation empirique" (Rancière 1998, p. 75).

The emphasis is, thus, explicitly on the school-form. And as Rancière suggests, 'form' is to be understood as an "*agencement*": "un agencement de mots, des montages de gestes, des occupations d'espaces" (Rancière 2009, p. 597). In a recent text, Tim Ingold offers a very helpful clarification of this French word. He states that "agencement" is often considered untranslatable, but that it refers to the noun 'agency' turned into the gerund of a verb so that we could speak about "becoming agent" or "agencing" (Ingold 2018, p. 24). He writes: "I take *agencement* to refer to the way in which the 'I' of habit is continually engendered in the wake of action, more as a question than assertion [...] equivalent to [...] interstitial differentiation opening up 'the cleave of the event' from within [...]. In French the word is the gerund of the verb *agencer*, which might be rendered in English, [...] as 'to agence', hence 'agencing'. Yet in its primary meaning, *agencer* suggests something altogether different [...]. It [...] means to fit together parts that bear only an external relation to one another in order to make a coherent whole [...]. In a word, it is to assemble. An *agencement*, then, is quite simply an assembly. It is this double meaning of *agencement*, referring at once to a process of interstitial differentiation and exterior assembly, of correspondence and articulation, joining *with* and joining *up*, that has made the term so difficult to translate, but also so rich in semantic potential" (ibid., p. 45). Taking these

scolaire, en identifiant le temps social de l'école au temps naturel de la maturation des enfants, masque cette rupture symbolique fondamentale [...]. L'école n'est pas préparation, elle est séparation. [...] L'école ne *promet* pas mensongèrement une égalité qu'elle laisserait démentir par la réalité sociale. Elle n'est 'l'apprentissage' d'aucune condition. Elle est une *occupation*, séparée des autres, gouvernée en particulier par une logique hétérogène à celle de l'ordre productif. Ses effets divers sur les autres ordres tiennent d'abord à la façon dont elle propage les façons de l'égalité. [...] l'école est le lieu privilégié de la négociation de l'égalité, porteur de modèles de société qui mettent en crise les modèles sociaux enracinés dans l'"apprentissage" de la vie productive." (Rancière 1988, pp. 2–3, 5).

indications we could say that the 'school-form' as 'agencement' is an assembly becoming agent (an assembly agencing), the fitting together of parts that start to act or operate in a certain way. Rancière clearly states that *the school-form of learning* in this sense, as an assembly agencing, is the place of equality par excellence (despite the 'stultifying masters' that at times make it their home) and that it has to be distinguished crucially from the *apprentice-form of learning* where the time-space of learning and of labor are not separated. Hence, in *École, production, égalité* Rancière makes a strict distinction between the school-child ("l'écopier") and the apprentice or trainee ("l'apprenti"). And he adds that the school society of pupils being egalitarian, this *scholastic democracy* ("cette démocratie scolaire", Rancière 1988, p. 9), constitutes a threat for the *socialization* and *initiation* proper to the labor(ing) society of apprentices.

Let us relate this to what Rancière states in a recent conversation with Eric Hazan regarding the times we live in (and where he is in fact repeating what he has been saying in various ways at other occasions): that democracy is not a political regime, but that it is the *equal and anarchic condition* of the existence of power that is specifically political, but that it is precisely for that reason also the condition that the exercise of power continually tries to tame or control and repress (cf. Rancière 2017, p. 8). This anarchic condition means that there are no natural (pre-given) connections or bonds between bodies and capacities and positions (in the social order). Starting from here we could say, in an analogical way, that 'school/the scholastic' is not a learning institution or organization, but that it is the *equal and erratic condition* of the existence of power that is specifically educational, and that it is precisely for that reason that it is also the condition that the exercise of institutional educational power tries to control or tame. When Rancière relates the *anarchic* condition of politics explicitly to equality and to the capacity to interrupt the connections between bodies, capacities and social positions, he also entails more implicitly that there is an *erratic* condition, a condition of freedom, where human beings have no natural destination (what in German would be called 'Bestimmung'). The bonds between bodies, capacities and social positions are always part of a sharing (partition, distribution) of the sensible ("un partage du sensible"), a consensus which is never 'natural'. We could say that both the democratic and scholastic condition (being without natural, or predefined cultural or social, destination) is in that sense one of radical equality and freedom, which is not making education impossible but makes it precisely possible. Our scholastic fable takes, then, 'school' at once for the name of a condition and a form. The form being an *agencement*, an assembly of parts (matter) becoming agent and actualizing a condition.

The school-form is the separation of free time (school-time) from productive time, of the space-time of learning for the sake of learning from the space-time of labor and learning for the sake of labor (the apprentice-form). School is not the time of maturation and keeps the external finalities of labor outside. School is a place without external finality, and hence has no and needs no pre-determined effects. It is no means for equality, but itself the place of equality par excellence. The occupation of the school is governed by a logic that is heterogeneous to the logic of production. Hence, Rancière writes, as a kind of summary: the "essence" of the school is "*the putting on/at a distance of production*" ("son essence [...] la mise en distance de la production", Rancière 1988, p. 6). Rancière then further discusses the school in relation to professional and vocational education. He states that the new industrial condition that arose at the beginning of the 19th century, which could be called the second industrial revolution introducing machines at the center of modern factories implied that the traditional organization of learning in the framework of apprenticeship and workshops no longer sufficed, and that now 'professional' schools were needed. The work at and on machines, even if being hand-work (manufacture), needed at least some literacy for their use (primary education), and some more learning for their maintenance (secondary education) and development (higher education). Hence, school becomes functional for the modern factory. But, as we have read, the school-form is also a place and function *without external finality*, it has also a working or *agencing* of its own. It is, we could say, strongly emancipatory, leading out of a social condition. As the space-time of equality the school is not approaching children as defined by particular social or intellectual characteristics, or as sons or daughters, but as pupils ("écoliers") and hence it loosens "the bonds that locks bodies into an estimation of their capacity" and that defines their futures based on their social conditions. This is attested from the negative in a quotation which Rancière mentions stating that scholastic democratic social life "offers a 'false' idea because it makes the school-children ("écoliers") exit from the economic conditions, whereas the children ("les enfants") (and the same are meant) remain buried in this condition" (Rancière 1988, p. 10). The scholastic symbolism is, thus, no illusion which would deny the reality of production, but a social form which actually intervened to redistribute the social activities. And Rancière adds that going to school was strongly related to a belief in social emancipation where children would get access to a better life than their parents. And it was, hence, a very real and scaring affair for secondary school children to threaten them that if they would not succeed in school they would have to go directly to the factory and work with their hands.

In this context it is worthwhile to refer to David Lancy's (2008) comprehensive study on the anthropology of childhood. One of his most striking observations is that the introduction of the 'village school' and the arrival of schoolteachers who come to educate village children in unfamiliar and *locally useless* knowledge and skills, removing them to the schoolhouse and introducing them in new literacies (new readings of world, new ways of reasoning), represented a constitutive *rupture* in the agricultural societies. It has been leading children to leave their village, robbing the local farmers of the labor and the cultural loyalty of their children, undermining the 'chore curriculum', local apprenticeship and initiation practices, and introducing cultural and personal dehiscence on deeper levels (see Kennedy 2018). The village school was, thus, interrupting and disrupting cultural epistemologies and forms of life in the interest of an allegedly better future. Displacing a little the words of Rancière related to the emancipation of the laborers, we can say that this emancipation was not about a particular culture, a particular thought, a particular social life emerging or springing from a particular land, from a particular condition or way of life, but that it was always about the *rupture with an identity*, about taking distance from that which was supposed to be their (particular) culture, get out of it, to search for an exit out of their condition. As an echo of Kant's famous description of Enlightenment as an exit, "einen Ausgang" ("[...] le pouvoir de la rupture, la construction de l'émancipation ouvrière comme rupture avec une identité [...] d'une condition subie [...] de sortir de celle-ci, par conséquent de prendre distance avec ce qui était supposé être leur culture", Rancière 2009, p. 643). And we can state that the school was precisely that. A place of 'exit'. And that the introduction of unfamiliar, useless knowledge and skills can be related to this emancipation of the laborer which implied "the possibility to acquire ways of saying, ways of seeing, ways of being which were in rupture with those imposed by the order of domination" ("la possibilité de se faire des manières de dire, des manières de voir, des manières d'être qui sont en rupture avec celles qui sont imposées par l'ordre de la domination", *ibid.*, pp. 624–625). It was about ignoring in some sense that one is destined to work with one's hands while others could enjoy the benefactions of contemplation and aesthetic regard. It was always about a dis-identification ("se désidentifier par rapport à une mode d'identité") or a changing of identity. "Professional or not, the school is the place of a change in identity" (Rancière 1988, p. 9). In other words, the school was actually and strongly bringing 'play' in the social order. Going to school, becoming a pupil (school-child) like anyone else, entering a space-time of equality when traversing the threshold of the school, becoming part of a society of equals, was the moment where people left their social destination.

Thinking further, for a moment, leaning on what we have read from Rancière, the school as form would refer to the time and space that starts from the assumption that human beings have no (natural, or social, cultural, ...) destiny, and therefore, should have the opportunity to find their own destiny. The notion of school would refer to that simple, but far-reaching assumption.⁴ And de-schooling would refer to the opposite assumption that society (science, religion, culture) has to impose a destiny on young people (impose an external purpose in the words of Rancière) through sustaining the development of their so-called natural talents, through projecting a predefined image of the educated or cultivated person, through assuming a process of (psychological, physical, moral, ...) development or maturation etc. Thus: the basic assumption of school-learning is that it is *a matter of practice or study* that does not rely on a given (natural or social) destiny. This is a pedagogical/scholastic understanding of freedom, and related to that, there is a pedagogical/scholastic understanding of equality. This is not a political freedom (towards power or authority), not a juridical freedom (in terms of rights) and not an economic freedom (in the sense of, for instance, freedom of choice). The pedagogical/scholastic understanding of freedom simply means that human beings have no natural or social destination, and therefore are able to shape themselves and give themselves direction to their destination.⁵ Equality in pedagogical/scholastic terms is not the same as social equality (being equal or making equal in social, cultural, economic, national ... terms), it is not juridical equality (everyone is equal before the law, and everyone should be treated equally according to the law), and it is not about equality of opportunities or outcomes (for instance, to treat or compensate for inequality and to bring everyone at the same start line or to help everyone to pass the same finish line). The school-form is neither oriented towards and tamed by a political utopia nor by a normative ideal of a person, but is *in itself* the materialization of a utopian belief: *everybody can learn everything*. Stated differently: neither what you can learn, nor what you have to

⁴For a more extensive elaboration see Masschelein and Simons (2013).

⁵In that sense, this freedom is even at the basis of politics, since "the issue of politics is first of all the issue of whatever bodies to get hold of their destiny" ("Car la question politique est d'abord celle de la capacité des corps quelconques à s'emparer de leur destin." Rancière 2008, p. 88). See also regarding the relation between pedagogical and political subjectivation: Simons and Masschelein 2010b.

learn are 'naturally' (pre)defined. This belief is, in our view, not a kind of goal or aim (projected in the future), but the point of departure. There are clearly other points of departure possible when it comes to learning (e.g. some students should a priori be excluded from certain subjects or natural ability is a decisive criterion to decide on when and what to learn). The school is the making possible of the 'everybody can' on the one hand, and the 'everything' on the other hand. What the school form does (if it works as a school i.e. turns someone into a student or pupil) is the double movement of bringing someone into a position of 'being able' which is at the same time an exposure to something outside (and hence, an act of presenting and exposing the world). School entails an experience of being able and being exposed. The school offers the experience of being a student or pupil, not a son or daughter. It is the visible mark of our acknowledgment that 'our children are not 'our' children. And we remind that one of the main meanings of the Latin 'pupillus' is 'orphan', hence becoming a pupil is interrupting the (oedipal) identity logic/fight within any family. It interrupts this family logic in the same way as it interrupts the logic of labor and production. School is a plural and embodied performativity, a very concrete assembly of bodies saying: we are no family and not becoming one, we are 'singulars' (in the plural). They 'say' without saying, as a bodily enactment: 'we are not disposable, but call for attention and regard'. Which means that initiation or socialization are in fact interrupted and complicated, not facilitated, by taking children to school. The plurality of the school is about addressing everyone as 'just one' (not as representative or descendent) but *not* about recognizing each 'person' as having its own 'properties' or 'property', its 'own' talents, 'needs'. It is about refusing any 'natural' or predefined connection between bodies and their 'proper' characteristics or the capacities ascribed or attributed to them. It offers the experience of being without destination but being able to find one's own destination.

Rancière is not offering many indications of how the school-form establishes or established the separation of the logic of production, the separation of times, spaces and occupations, the putting at a distance. We suggest, however, that this separation is 'agenced' not simply through the 'content' but through the 'matter' it 'assembles', the matter of school. Roughly formulated we can think: 1) of the matter of the concrete architecture and topos created by the walls, the gates and doors of schools and classrooms (constituting thresholds, enclosures and the door being the place where the ignorant schoolmaster stands to support the effort of attention: "the master won't have the right to stand anywhere else – only at

the door", Rancière 1987, p. 42)⁶; 2) of the matter of the school-objects (think of all the school material been made from the letterboxes to the school-plates) and schoolbooks (and we can refer to the *Télémaque* presented in two languages, each on one side, that Jacotot used for his basic 'experiment' and for the exercise of attention that it allowed) which all imply a strong artificiality, a hyper-functionalization and grammatization of the world as 'subject-matter' and 'school-stuff', which is the moment where also the things of the world leave their daily life-world 'to go to school', which means in a way to go 'on vacation' (cf. Rancière 2008), where the things are separated from their destination in the reigning usual order (cf. Rancière 2009, p. 626), separated from their functions and are presented to the eyes and the hands of the school-children, the pupils, who do not know yet what they see or are still uncertain how to handle them, but experience the ability to begin with them, where the things are offered for exercise and contemplation – as Rancière states in relation to the museum, the theater, the book: their 'effect' is related to the partitions of spaces and times and the ways of presenting that they institute (cf. Rancière 2008, p. 71); 3) of the matter of the blackboards and tables, that at once allow to cut off almost everything in order to pay attention to some things, to present something, to make that we one can attend, get in company and become attentive; 4) of the matter of the exercises (and Jacotot is permanently promoting exercises as repeating, copying, learning by heart, etc.); 5) and of course of the schoolmasters who, even if they are stultifying, have to address a collective of pupils (which is not a 'target group') that forces them to speak and act in public, and who are themselves the embodiment of occupations that have become idle – i.e. non-productive, since the carpenter which becomes a schoolteacher and is teaching carpentry in school is no longer a 'real' carpenter and has not to live from his carpentry. As Rancière writes: at school the school-child, different from the apprentice in the workshop, is confronted with teachers that get their living from teaching and not from the profession or occupation they might teach ("[...] à l'école il n'a sous les yeux que des professeurs qui vivent de l'enseignement qu'ils lui donnent et non du métier qu'ils lui apprennent", Rancière 1988, p. 7). It becomes therefore indeed carpentry for the sake of carpentry. Thus, in relation to the discussion about 'masters', we should not forget that the school is not just a place to teach, but that as a material form ('matter' in the different senses we just have indicated), as 'agencement', it also acts on the teacher (making him or her so to say) and that reversely, it is a *schoolteacher*,

⁶See also Cornelissen (2010).

i.e. someone who not only teaches but precisely takes part in making school ('free time', separation) happen.

Our scholastic fable takes, than, 'school' at once for the name of a condition and of a form. The form being an agencement, an assembly becoming agent. The school-form of learning in this sense, which has to be distinguished crucially from the apprentice-form of learning, *assembles matter* (walls, tables, books, school objects, subject matter, schoolteachers) which is 'becoming agent' of equality and freedom that in the modern times of the industrial factory and of 'rural villages' actually constituted a strong emancipatory power. One could maybe even argue, even if we are not going to expand on this, that it was actually the school (the condition of freedom and equality articulated in its form and its matter) which offered the basis for the autonomy of the art-form which as Rancière himself states offers in a way the bases for political acts.⁷ Besides the theatre, the museum and later the cinema, the school is the often forgotten or neglected (despised or disregarded) agencing assembly that 'gave air' and created 'play' in the social order. The school has also been, as any emancipation: "a way to create another time in the heart of the normal order of time, a way to inhabit in a different way the common sensible world. It has always been a way of living in the present in another world rather than preparing a world to come" (Rancière 2017, pp. 31–32). Moreover, Rancière seems himself to imply that the school-form offers a base for democracy when he writes: "[D]emocracy is rather a way of life of individuals than a government of collectives. It can practically only be governed by ignoring, in their reunions, what founds her: the non-concord of the

⁷Rancière states that political acts just as artistic forms are "agencements de mots, des montages de gestes, des occupations d'espaces. Dans les deux cas ce qui se produit c'est une modification du tissu sensible, une transformation du donné visible, des intensités, des noms qu'on peut donner aux choses, du paysage du possible. Ce qui distingue proprement les actions politiques, c'est que ces opérations y sont les actes d'un collectif sujet, qui se donne pour le représentant de tous, de la capacité de tous. Ce type d'invention est spécifique, mais il se fait *sur la base* des modifications du tissu sensible produites en particulier par les reconfigurations artistiques des espaces et des temps, des formes et des significations." (Rancière 2009, pp. 597–598; our italics) In this context, we could refer e.g. to the wonderful work of Juan Bordes who aims to demonstrate that the sources of (avant-garde) art movements and of modern art lay in the educational toys and school objects which were part of the life of many nineteenth-century children (Bordes 2007, 2010).

scholastic order and the productive order" ("[...] la démocratie est une mode de vie des individus plutôt que de gouvernements des collectifs. Elle ne peut guère se gouverner qu'à ignorer, dans ses rassemblements, ce qui la fonde: la non-concordance de l'ordre scolaire et de l'ordre productif", Rancière 1988, p. 12).

If, with Rancière, we can say the school (form) is the time and space of separation (taking distance from the logics of production and the necessities and constraints of 'labor'), the time and space of study and exercise (learning for the sake of learning or profanated learning), the time and space of equality par excellence, than, as Rancière states himself, the matter *with* school today is, that this time of separation is ending or has ended. In a way, Rancière states, the generalization of the scholastic equality (at least in our societies) annihilates its emancipatory effects. It created effects of social redistribution to the extent that she differed from the productive order: the school "is only producing equality to the extent that she is un-adapted to the sensibilities and ways of being of the productive army" (Rancière 1988, p. 11). But now, today, the scholastic order has become synchronized with the productive order. "The time of *separation*, a characteristic of the school-form becomes now identical to time of *arrears* which is characteristic of the apprentice-form." (ibid.) School has become a form of production and the parents who send their children to them no longer imagine that they will take other social positions than themselves. Let us supplement Rancière's observations by referring briefly to Vilhelm Flussers observations to further articulate the end of the time of separation or the omnipresence of the logic of production, and to further clarify what is the matter with school in the so-called third industrial revolution. In a short text on *The factory* Flusser defines the factory in a very broad sense as "the place where something is manufactured. [...] Manufacturing means turning what is available in the environment to one's own advantage, turning it into something manufactured, turning it over to use and thus turning it to account. These turning movements are carried out initially by hands, then by tools, machines and, finally, robots" (Flusser 1999, p. 44). In the time of the hand, the factory is everywhere and nowhere; the tools of the first industrial revolution are to be found in the workshop where the tool-user (e.g. artisan) is in the center; machines constitute the center of the modern factories of the second industrial revolution which are concentrated in huge complexes, and, finally, robots are again everywhere (like the hands were and actually now constantly in our hands). Writing in the beginning of the nineties of the previous century Flusser refers to the factories

of the future and what he calls their 'functionaries' (and not their laborers): "At first glance, it looks as though we are almost back to the pre-tool phase of manufacturing. Just like primitive man acting directly on nature using his hands and therefore manufacturing all the time and everywhere, future functionaries equipped with tiny or even invisible robots will be engaged in manufacture all the time and everywhere. [...] Thanks to robots, everyone will be linked to everyone else everywhere and all the time, and [...] *they will turn to use everything available to be turned into something and turned to account*" (ibid., p. 48; our italics). In the course of this evolution, Flusser says, less and less inherited information makes the factories work and more and more acquired and learned information is involved. For the tools this information is stored in 'culture' and 'empirically' acquired (through initiation and socialization), for the machines it has to do with scientific knowledge, mainly physics and chemistry which cut off of culture (and is in need of schools), for the robots, it implies additionally scientific knowledge of neurophysiology and biology in a broad sense. But "the becoming immaterial of the factory" requires in fact that "all human beings are competent enough for this" (ibid., p. 49). Which, as Flusser states, is not self-evident, and which makes together with the fact that it is more and more creativity that is required, that these (immaterial) factories of the future will look more and more like schools, like scientific laboratories, art academies, libraries and collections of recordings. But also the reverse: schools, scientific laboratories, art academies etc. will look more and more like factories, that is, they will be productive ("*they will turn to use everything available to be turned into something and turned to account*"). So now, Flusser writes, it will become apparent "that the factory is nothing but an applied school and the school nothing but a factory for the acquisition of information [...] that manufacturing means the same thing as learning – i.e. acquiring, producing and passing on information" (ibid., pp. 49–50). And Flusser is very well aware that these factory-schools and school-factories are indeed dissolving the 'classic' separation of school (otium, scholè) and production (negotium, ascholia) thereby also affecting the possibility of taking a distance (of study). We could say that then (which is to a great extent 'now') there is no learning anymore for the sake of learning, but all learning '(ac)counts'. That then, in the words of Rancière, the time of separation has become not only the time of production but also the time of being behind (of arrears), permanently in search for and producing competences as (learning) outcomes that guarantee employability.

We cannot go into detail here, but building upon Flusser's adequate characterization of the immaterial, learning factory of the present, and of the school becoming like a factory and the factory like a school, we can point at the way in which today schools are transformed into learning environments as being

themselves (part of) 'capitalist' milieus in the sense that they aim at providing resources for producing learning outcomes in efficient and effective ways⁸ – and we should recall that "the proper characteristic of stultification, according to Jacotot, is always to presuppose the effect [...] really emancipation begins exactly when there is a rupture between cause and effect" ("C'est ça le propre de l'abrutissement selon Jacotot, c'est toujours de présupposer l'effet". [...] Vraiment l'émancipation commence lorsque justement, il y a rupture entre la cause et l'effet", Rancière 2009, p. 635). In these productive learning environments everything counts, has to be counted, and is taken into account, 'turned to use [...] to account' (cf. Flusser 1999, p. 48). But not only is the learning environment like a factory, also the factory becomes more and more a learning environment, the learning force and not the labor force⁹ being its essential production factor (hence, its workplace being called increasingly also 'a campus').¹⁰ This school as factory and factory as school is creative, active, productive, (cause-)effective, and inclusive in the sense that it is permanently taking into account and recognizing

⁸An important document of the European Commission on 'Rethinking Education' (EC-document 2012) states that this rethinking means to conceive of education as the production of learning outcomes. This 'fundamental shift', as the document rightly observes, implies that educational policy is essentially about 'stimulating open and flexible learning' and 'improving learning outcomes', i.e. increasing the performance of 'learning environments' (including the performance of institutions, teachers, students) which can be assessed through benchmarking (i.e. performance indicators). The overall aim being a more efficient and effective production process, employability (i.e. competences that are learning outcomes) being the product. And this implies even explicitly questioning the meaning of 'time spent in school' (cf. ibid., p. 5).

⁹According to Rancière what the recent French protest movements perceived in the 'loi-travail' was "the official declaration that henceforth, in our advanced societies, there is no reason anymore for labor to shape community, that it should now just constitute the way in which each individual manages its 'human capital'" ("[...] la déclaration officielle que désormais, dans nos sociétés avancées, le travail n'avait plus de raison de faire communauté, qu'il ne devait plus être que la manière dont chaque individu gère son 'capital humain'", Rancière 2017, p. 21).

¹⁰'Maximizing flexibility and producing one's own 'empty' learning productivity – without content or world – is becoming the aim of the fanatic learner who is the ideal worker that, for instance, Google is looking for. In a brief article on *How to get a Job at Google* in the NYT, Thomas Friedman quotes Laszlo Bock, "the senior vice president of people operations for Google – i.e., the guy in charge of hiring for one of the world's most successful companies" saying that "for every job, though, the No. 1 thing we look for is general cognitive ability, and it's not IQ. It's learning ability." (Friedman 2014)

(i.e. also producing) all kinds of individual differences (in talent, cultural or social resources, ...), putting the 'learner in the center' through a digitally enhanced and enabled 'profiling' which is precisely connecting bodies to talents, competencies, preferences, characteristics, personal (his)stories, performances, ... which all are constantly taken into account, so that there is nothing, no mouse-click, no 'error' which is not counting since (ac)counting is precisely what all the 'robots' ('learning platforms') and its 'functionaries' do. Here learning by producing/making (the 'learning-form' as being active, creative and exemplified by the upcoming 'fablabs') is replacing both 'learning by doing' (the apprentice-form) and 'learning by exercising and contemplating' (the school-form). No longer school children ("écoliers") and workshop-apprentices ("apprentis") but everywhere and all time *learners*.

The school becoming a factory, the factory becoming a school, the time of separation becoming the time of arrears and production, the issue becoming one of profiles (identities connecting bodies, capacities, positions) and of effective production (implying permanent feedback), all this is crucially affecting the possibilities of emancipation, the conditions of equality and freedom as we have described them with Rancière as being related to 'school'. We might say that with the school becoming a learning environment, and school children turned into learners we are at the end of school as *disruption*, and the school is now becoming indeed a socializing function of the *global village* as capitalist milieu that envelops us (see also Kennedy 2018) and inscribes us in a "consensus, i.e. in an already given sharing of roles, of the possible and of competencies" (Rancière 2009, p. 596). In this present, and when holding to the condition of freedom and equality, it becomes a central issue to think about how to reinvent the school (and its 'agencement') in order to be able to take a distance. Which is not at all a question regarding the ideal school (as the one who would meet a finality and produce the effects we, the adults, would imagine) but maybe regarding the invention of a 'new school', of a way "to excavate a hole" in the capitalist milieu of 'profiling', 'evidence-based', 'inclusive' learning environments, to constitute an interruption in the *global village* of today.

As Rancière has suggested regarding politics: that some principles and rules could be derived from the democratic principle (e.g. the lottery regarding the composition of government, brief government mandates or elective offices not to be cumulated or renewed) in order to *bring more democracy in our political institutions* ("mettre plus de démocratie dans les institutions", Rancière 2017, p. 8),

which is not to say that these measures (e.g. lottery) would eliminate as by wonder inequality, but they entail a different perspective on existing politics (ibid., p. 14), so we could also try to think about some principles and rules that could be derived from the scholastic principles to *bring more 'school' (as an anarchic and erratic condition of freedom and equality and as a form of separation) into our educational institutions* which have tamed to a large extent the school or are simply transforming themselves into productive 'learning environments'.¹¹ We contend, thus, that the school has to be reinvented to offer a 'space of play', 'give air' and 'excavate a hole' in the actual global capitalist village with its 'immaterial factories' (Flusser 1999, p. 49) but also with its 'sweating-system' which is employing labor for long hours at low wages and often under bad, unsafe and unsanitary conditions (Rancière 2009, p. 599). Hence, pleading a *defense of the school*,¹² has nothing to do with a conservative or nostalgic restauration of an old institution, but is a very concrete intervention in the present. It requires that we consider again the question of the *matter of school*. School as a means to 'exit' from the condition of the factory, a means to interrupt its logic, not to make the factory function by learning and 'training' its functionaries, but school as a means to *study* the factory and to separate oneself from its logic. So, how to think and practice the wall, the textbook, the subject matter, the table, the teacher to separate oneself from today's factory and becoming able to relate to it?

To end only a brief thought on 'pedagogy' and the 'pedagogical logic'. Indeed, in many conversations and at many occasions Rancière denounces what he calls the "pedagogical logic", or the "pedagogical view of the world and, especially, the pedagogical vision of the world in politics, this kind of view which assumes that if there is domination, if there is subjection, than ignorance is its reason"

¹¹And let us just indicate that precisely for thinking about ways to have 'more school' and how the matter could be conceived, it could be helpful also to consider how Rancière approaches the issue of the screen (so omnipresent) as having a separating function (becoming so to say a kind of wall) (Rancière 2009, p. 602). In order to develop this, we would have to deal with Rancière's many reflections upon the aesthetic regime and the spectator where he both deals with the kind of surfaces to construct and the kind of images to make in order to deregulate the normal functioning of the surfaces and the depths. We would have to deal with his love for the cinema, etc. but this is something we cannot do here anymore.

¹²See Masschelein and Simons (2013), Larrosa (2017, 2011).

("la vision pédagogique du monde et, en particulier, (de) la vision pédagogique du monde en politique, cette espèce de vision qui pense que s'il y a domination, s'il y a sujétion, c'est en raison de l'ignorance", Rancière 2009, p. 640) The normal pedagogical logic, so Rancière writes, states that the ignorants don't know how to leave their state of ignorance so that you have to trace the path from ignorance to knowledge for them (cf. *ibid.*, p. 655). And the pedagogue is the one which organizes this voyage from inequality to equality ("le pedagogue est toujours celui qui organise le voyage de l'inégalité vers l'égalité.", *ibid.*, p. 623). However, in line with Rancière's vision that school is not to be thought as a means for an end, we could deregulate and open up the notion of pedagogy by referring to the original meaning of (the Greek) 'pedagogue', who was not the teacher, who, for his status and interventions, did not rely on a difference between the savant and the ignorant, who did not address the child as an ignorant, and did not organize the pathway from ignorance to knowledge, but was in fact the slave, leading the child by the hand out of the family and the society (and its inequality, its identity logics and inscriptions) to the school, "the place of equality par excellence", and was staying there to make sure it remained a school. In that sense, in order to add to the story of emancipation we maybe need, precisely today, pedagogues and are urgently in need of a pedagogical fable.

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